

Army leader on ground with Kandahar ‘Devils’

By Lt. Col. Jeremy Martin
Army Public Affairs

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Under Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee visited Saturday with soldiers and leaders of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, “Devils,” 82nd Airborne Division at Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan.

Brownlee was welcomed to Kandahar by Col. John F. Campbell, 504th PIR commander and the regiment’s top sergeant, Command Sgt. Maj. Gary Kalinowski.

Brownlee had meals with soldiers, visited the operational centers of U.S. and coalition forces, and received op-

erational updates from task force commanders.

TF commanders briefed Brownlee on current operations and the complexity of their missions being conducted in a hostile and challenging environment.

“The challenge we face is executing operations over long distances, and over those distances maintaining (command and control), force protection, and security at multiple locations, while maintaining the ability to mass combat power at the proper place and time,” said Maj. Malcolm Frost, Regimental S-3.

“We measure our success

— See **BROWNLEE**, Page 4



Courtesy Photo

Staff Sgt. Kurt F. Schmitz, a flight medic with the 1042nd Medical Company (Air Assault), Oregon National Guard, receives congratulations on a job well done from Under Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee, Saturday at Kandahar Air Field. Schmitz was recently hoisted into an area of unexploded ordnance to provide primary care to a soldier who stepped on a land mine.

Marine maintenance crews keep their Harriers flying



Photo by Spc. Marie Schult, CJTF-180 Public Affairs

Marine Cpl. Michael Borem, VMA 513, ordnance maintenance crew, attaches the lanyard of a 500-pound laser-guided bomb. When the bomb is deployed the lanyard breaks, initiating the propulsion system.

Spc. Marie Schult
CJTF-180 PAO

BAGRAM, Afghanistan— They crawl inside, underneath, on top of and all around. They scrutinize every inch of its 46-foot frame, every tire and every bomb. They inspect the seat, the gadgets and the gizmos.

They are the maintenance crews of Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 513, Yuma, Ariz. They spend their days and nights performing maintenance on Harriers.

“We perform daily maintenance to ensure the aircraft is safe for flight,” said Marine Sgt. Del-Ray Hamilton, power line mechanic, VMA 513, as he inspects the engine intake making sure the blades are not damaged.

Hamilton, from Casa Grande, Ariz., is performing just one of the many inspections that

— See **MAINTENANCE**, Page 3

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)

Iraqis have found more warheads

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraqi officials said they have found four more empty chemical warheads similar to 12 others found last week, the U.N.'s chief weapons inspector said Sunday.

Hans Blix, in Baghdad with top nuclear weapons inspector Mohamed ElBaradei, said on CNN's "Late Edition" that the 12 empty warheads were on the agenda for talks Sunday with Iraqi officials.

"They said they had been surprised themselves," about finding the empty warheads, Blix said. "They were in boxes, never opened — there were bird droppings on them. But of course they should have been declared and destroyed."

The discovery of four more such warheads — and the potential to discover more — raises the question of whether they are "remnants of the past [or] the tip of an iceberg," Blix said.

Saddam exile could avoid war

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Sunday that exile for Saddam Hussein and other members of the Iraqi leadership would be a "fair trade" to avoid a military conflict.

"I ... would recommend that some provision be made so that the senior leadership in that country and their families could be provided haven in some other country," Rumsfeld said on ABC's "This Week." "I think that that would be a fair trade to avoid a war."

"I think that the people in his country know what a vicious regime [Saddam] runs. And they may decide to throw him out," he said.

"He and his family may decide that they've run their string and that they'll leave. ... Certainly, either of those courses would be preferable to the use of force."

Rumsfeld's comments came as the two top U.N. weapons inspectors, Hans Blix and Mohamed El Baradei, met with Iraqi officials in Baghdad to press for more cooperation in the search for weapons of mass destruction.



A South Korean sentry keeps an eye on the demilitarized zone between the two Koreas.

Russia offers nuclear deal

SEOUL, South Korea — A Russian envoy has delivered Moscow's plan to resolve the nuclear standoff between Washington and Pyongyang.

In meetings with North Korean officials, Russian Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Losyukov gave Pyongyang details of the plan, developed by Moscow over the past few weeks.

Under the proposal, unveiled to CNN by the Russian Foreign Ministry on Sunday, North Korea would once again sign onto the nuclear non-proliferation treaty that it withdrew from earlier this month.

For its part, the United States would have to completely follow through with its end of a 1994 pact, under which Pyongyang promised to freeze its nuclear program in return for aid.

In addition, the Russian plan calls for North Korea to receive a guarantee of not being attacked.

Canberra sifts through rubble

CANBERRA, Australia — Residents of the bush land around Canberra began sifting through the ashen rubble of their homes after a weekend of ferocious fires that killed four people and destroyed around 400 homes.

Following the worst fires ever to hit the capital, authorities on Monday urged residents whose homes survived not to return yet for fear of more fires or explosions from gas leaks.

Four people were killed from the gust-driven wild fires while hospitals treated

around 250 others for burns and smoke inhalation.

Thousands of people were evacuated during a state of emergency, which remains in place. Hundreds of homes were still without power after fires knocked out power stations and lines and the city faces a sewage crisis after a treatment plant was damaged.

Prime Minister John Howard toured some of the scorched areas around Canberra on Sunday, and said it was the worst fire damage he'd ever seen in Australia.



The state's chief minister has likened the bush fires to a 'holocaust.'

Anti-war protesters arrested

WASHINGTON — Police arrested 16 anti-war protesters who marched on the White House on Sunday in a second day of rallies against a possible war in Iraq that has drawn thousands to the capital.

Protesters chanted and sang as they approached the White House, but U.S. Park Police began making arrests after they exceeded the 25-demonstrator limit for Lafayette Park, across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House.

"We invited 25 in, and unfortunately, that's not what happened," Sgt. Scott Fear said. "It's a security issue — they knew this ahead of time."

Two missing girls found

KISSIMMEE, Florida — Two sisters, found Sunday morning after being lost overnight in freezing temperatures, said they huddled in a hollow tree to sleep when they were unable to attract the attention of search and rescue helicopters.

MAINTENANCE, from Page 1

must occur for a Harrier to take flight.

"Overall there are roughly 10 inspections performed," said Marine Capt. Mike Trapp, a pilot with VMA 513. Some inspections are done daily, others depend on flight hours.

Some of the daily inspections and maintenance checks include uploading and downloading ordnance, checking for corrosion on the airframe, checking the tires for wear and checking various aircraft systems.

Inspections and maintenance crews are essential to the operation of the Harriers because they are very sensitive aircraft, according to Marine Master Sgt. Patrick Vandynhoven, squadron maintenance chief.

Due to their vertical lift capabilities and the complicated manner in which they were designed, they must be cared for with expert hands. If even the smallest particle of runway debris is sucked into the intake and damages the blades, the engine must be pulled out and repaired. This is a complicated procedure, involving the removal of the wing, because the engine is internally mounted to the airframe.

"We depend on the maintenance crews 100 percent," said Trapp, from Yuma, Ariz.

Pilots have complete trust in the maintenance crews because they are responsible for checking things the pilots don't look at, he said.

Vandynhoven, said the day is either very hectic or slow depending on the flight sched-



Photos by Spc. Marie Schult

Marine Cpl. Clifford Rocha, powerline mechanic, VMA 513, performs his daily inspections on the Harrier.

ule. The night shift is usually responsible for getting the Harriers geared up for their night missions and the day crew performs after flight maintenance.

"We're always downloading and uploading bombs, there's always something to do," said Marine Cpl. Michael Borem a member of the ordnance crew for VMA 513. "I enjoy my job," added the Sacramento, Calif., native.

Even though the crews pull 12-hour shifts seven days a week, inspecting Harriers takes up a small portion of that time.



Marines from VMA 513, perform the final checks, before sending the Harrier up for a night mission.

The rest of the day, maintenance crews spend their time either fixing aircraft or at a minimum, maintaining them and training on new skills or honing old ones. Vandynhoven, a Wisconsin, native, said, his finely trained Marines not only always seem to be improving their skills but performing old ones better.

In Yuma, an engine pull takes up to a week, he said, in Afghanistan it takes two to three days. Vandynhoven attributes this exemplary performance to the fact that the Marines are more focused on their mission. They do not have the immediate demands of family and a social life.

Even though the crews themselves would rather work on the planes than comment on the importance of their job and their personal mission, their superiors have enough praise to make up for their stoicism.

"When we launch a mission it is the direct result of their hard work," said Trapp.



Marine Sgt. Del-Ray Hamilton, VMA 513, powline mechanic, inspects the intake on a Harrier at Bagram Air Base. Hamilton inspects the Harrier's engine blades every day to ensure they are serviceable.

BROWNLEE, from Page 1

by our ability to disrupt the enemy's ability to plan, rehearse, and coordinate operations against coalition Forces, and by denying them sanctuary in Afghanistan — since 9-11 there's been no cohesive, coordinated attack against U.S. or Coalition forces," said Frost.

"We're blessed with great leaders, and a tremendous NCO Corps," said Campbell.

"I can't say enough about the sacrifices our soldiers make, (they're) a highly motivated volunteer force, proud to be on point for our nation," said Campbell.

Brownlee lauded the efforts of numerous soldiers throughout the visit, including Staff Sgt. Kurt F. Schmitz, a flight medic with the 1042nd Medical Company (Air Assault), Oregon National Guard who was recently hoisted into an area of unexploded ordnance to provide primary care to a soldier who stepped on a mine, who was then hoisted from the minefield and is recovering.

Lt. Col. Terry V. Morgan, Task Force Sabre commander, said this is still a very dangerous environment — we're prepared for combat, and realize the dangers.

"I've never seen a better unit, or one that was more ably led," said Brownlee.

"The war is far from over, but the job you've done in Afghanistan is nothing short of a miracle — thank you," said Brownlee.

"On behalf of Secretary Tom White and the American people, thank you for what you are doing. It's a tough job, very demanding and we appreciate the tremendous sacrifice and dedication from you and your families," said Brownlee. "It's my responsibility for us to perform better," he added.

Addressing an overflow group of eager U.S. and coalition soldiers at "Kandahar Kafe," Under Secretary Brownlee concluded his remarks to soldiers by recalling the words echoed by the Commander in Chief in the immediate aftermath of 9-11. "We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts and by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, we will not fail."

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: "The Thin Red Line." In World War II, the outcome of the battle of Guadalcanal will strongly influence the Japanese's advance into the Pacific. A group of soldiers is brought in as a relief for the battle-weary Marine units. The exhausting fight for an airfield that allows control over a 1000-mile radius puts the men through hell. Tomorrow's movie will be "Changing Lanes."



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER REPORT:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>
Bagram:	Partly cloudy H: 55F L: 21F	Partly cloudy H: 52F L: 30F
Kandahar:	Partly cloudy H: 57F L: 43F	Mist H: 61F L: 39F
Kabul:	Haze H: 52F L: 34F	Partly cloudy H: 48F L: 31F
Uzbekistan:	Fog w/rain H: 38F L: 30F	Fog w/snow H: 36F L: 27F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)

Raiders reach first Super Bowl in 19 years

OAKLAND, Calif. — Tinged with a touch of gray, the Silver and Black are back in the Super Bowl.

The Oakland Raiders passed and brawled their way to a 41-24 victory over the Tennessee Titans in the AFC title game on Sunday, getting three touchdown throws from 37-year-old Rich Gannon.

Gannon's thirty-something teammates — Jerry Rice, Bill Romanowski, Rod Woodson and, finally, Tim Brown — sent the Raiders and their maverick owner, Al Davis, to the NFL title game for the first time in 19 years.

They'll go for their fourth Super Bowl title next Sunday in San Diego, taking on the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, who beat the Philadelphia Eagles 27-10 in the NFC championship game earlier in the day.

"I've been looking at this game for 14 years and watching other people go," Brown said.

"Now, I'm finally on my way. It's a great feeling," he added.

Oakland's oft-touted "Commitment to Excellence" will be tested by a coach who knows it well — Jon Gruden, who left the Raiders after last season for the Bucs.

"How ya doing, Coach?," Raiders receiver Jerry Porter quipped. "I'll see ya later."

On a clear, perfect day at a stadium known as the Black Hole, the Raiders looked as much like the old



Jerry Porter pulls in a 31-yard reception Sunday.

brawling group of renegades they used to be as the new pass-happy team they have become.

The old: 14 penalties for 127 yards, a handful of cheap shots and a bevy of vicious hits on Steve McNair, who paid a huge price for his 190 passing yards and two rushing touchdowns.

The new: Unbelievably, Oakland called exactly one running play over the first three quarters, leaving the work to Gannon, the league MVP who threw 41 times for 286 yards and also scrambled for 41 more, including a

fourth-quarter touchdown.



The Raiders celebrated their 41-24 victory. This will be their fifth visit to the Super Bowl.

Injured knee ends season for Williams

ALAMEDA, Calif. — The Oakland Raiders placed starting tight end Roland Williams on injured reserve Saturday, ending his hopes of returning today for the AFC championship game.

The Raiders signed running back Madre Hill from the practice squad to take Williams' spot on the 53-man roster. By placing Williams on injured reserve, he is done for the season and will not be available for the Super Bowl.

Williams has a torn medial collateral ligament in his left knee, along with a partially torn anterior cruciate ligament and some meniscus damage.

The 6-foot-5, 265-pound Williams also has turf toe on his left foot and torn ligaments in a toe on the same foot that will require surgery after the season.

He said this week he was working to convince the coaching staff he was healthy enough to play.

Williams participated in limited agility drills during Wednesday's practice but no running. He underwent treatment Thursday and was listed as doubtful for the conference title game against the Tennessee Titans.

Williams was hurt on the Raiders' final drive midway through the fourth quarter of a 24-0 win over Kansas City on Dec. 28.

He has been a key blocker this season and has 27 catches for 213 yards and no touchdowns.

Williams has been wearing a protective brace and undergoing treatment up to three times a day. He has regained some mobility in his knee and is able to do limited strength work.

Bucs stop McNabb, earn first Super Bowl berth

PHILADELPHIA — The Tampa Bay Buccaneers dismissed all of it: the 26-degree weather, hostile Veterans Stadium and an inability to win a road playoff game.

They simply rolled up their sleeves and put their league-leading defense to work against Donovan McNabb and the Philadelphia Eagles.

Now, the Bucs are going to sunny San Diego for their first Super Bowl, a long, sad history behind them.

After being stunned by a Philadelphia touchdown in the first minute of the NFC Championship game Sunday, the Bucs took over to beat the Eagles 27-10.

"Nobody really expected us to win this game," said Tampa Bay coach John Gruden, in his first year with the team. "That fueled our enthusiasm to play."

The Bucs had lost three consecutive games at Veterans Stadium, unable to score even one offensive touchdown. They had only one victory ever in temperatures under 40. They were 0-6 in postseason



Jon Gruden had plenty to yell about during the Bucs' win over the Eagles.

road games.

And they had to face some of the league's toughest fans on slippery turf in the Vet's final NFL game.

They were able to erase the past — a dismal 20 years as the league's worst franchise that only changed direction when they discarded the orange jerseys they had worn from their inception in 1976-97. Since then, Tampa Bay has missed the playoffs just once.

"Derrick Brooks, Warren Sapp and myself have been here the longest," safety and fellow Pro Bowler John Lynch said. "We wore the orange. We suffered through some tough years. We worked so hard for this opportunity but we told each other we're not done yet."

After the Eagles' early flurry, sparked by Brian Mitchell's 70-yard return of the opening kickoff, it was all Tampa Bay. The Bucs led 17-10 at halftime and stifled Philadelphia after intermission. Gruden and the Bucs will play his old team, the Oakland Raiders, next Sunday.

McNabb fails to get Eagles over hump

PHILADELPHIA — Donovan McNabb had no room to run and nowhere to pass.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers completely shut down McNabb and Philadelphia's offense Sunday, beating the Eagles 27-10 to advance to the Super Bowl.

McNabb, playing his second game since returning from a broken right ankle that sidelined him for two months, had his worst game of the season at the most inopportune time — the NFC championship game.

"I played poorly," McNabb said. "There were opportunities to make plays, and I didn't make them."

The two-time Pro Bowl quarterback completed 26 of 49 for 243 yards, lost two fumbles and threw a costly interception that was returned 92 yards for a clinching touchdown by Ronde Barber late in the fourth quarter.

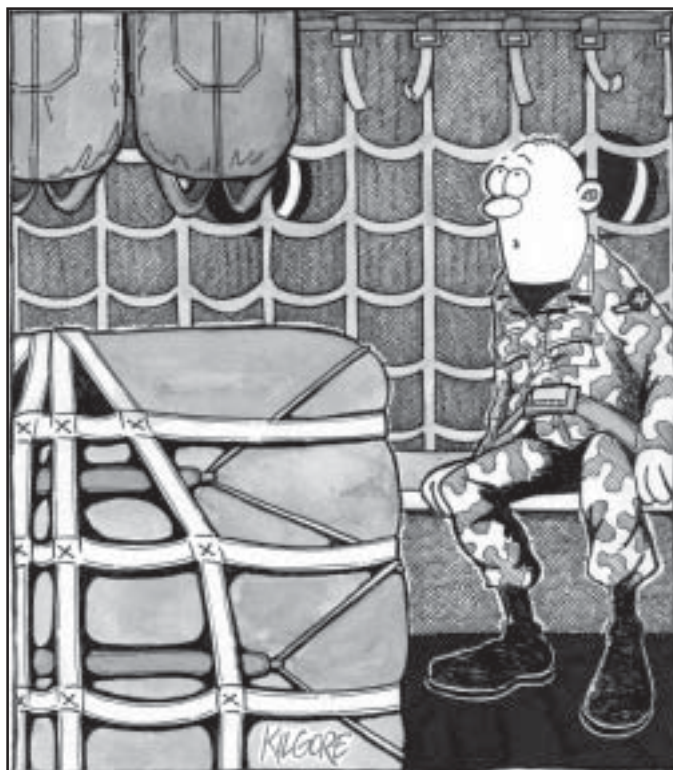
Constantly harassed by Tampa Bay's top-ranked defense, McNabb made several ill-advised throws, missed open receivers and couldn't scramble free.

He hardly looked like the MVP candidate he was before hurting his ankle in the 10th game of the season.

"You put all the pressure on yourself," McNabb said. "Any time a quarterback plays poorly, it makes it harder for everybody else."

"It's my responsibility for us to perform better," Eagles coach Andy Reid said. "I didn't do a good job putting us in better position."

"Six parachutes; four officers, two NCOs and one airman ... oh man ..."



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support